



THE ORDER OF THE GRYPHON

The Order of the Gryphon is no simple rag-bag mercenary group. We are no hoity-toity chivalric knighthood. We are no religious zealots, wide-eyed and wasteful. We are no peasant militia, beating our ploughshares to swords and our aprons to armour.

We are the Order of the Gryphon – the King’s elite. We are specialists recruited from all ages, all affiliations, and all races. We are sworn to obey the Crown, first and foremost, and that loyalty is rewarded in spades. We do the jobs no-one else can do, maintaining order and ending all threats to the Crown.

If you’re reading this, you have either taken the Oath of Loyalty and may be counted among our numbers, or you’re seriously thinking of doing so. Hopefully, this document will give you all you need to start with the Order – all else can only be learned by doing.





Quint has doubtless alluded to the founding of the Order in it's current form in one or another of his impenetrable essays. I'll try to break that down to the basics here for you, in nice simple terms.

Originally, we were the Gryphon Legion – a mercenary group based out of the Chapterhouse in Blackwall Keep, Arador. Unlike most other mercenary groups, the Legion focused on small groups of specialists picked for specific tasks rather than being able to field large blocks of troops.

When the Eruption happened, and everything fell apart, the Legion were contracted by the Aradorian Crown to assist their forces and help maintain peace. We marched alongside Elector-Knight Corbrey Vanadon, and helped enforce his dominance over the other warring fiefdoms, bringing peace to Corvantin and helping throw back the forces of the Shifting.

When he was crowned King, for our service, the Legion was placed on permanent retainer and given preferential rates. At this point, however, we were still a mercenary group and fought where the money was.

Following the death of Corbrey, we were employed during the Succession Wars on all sides of the conflict. Despite all this, however, the Lord-Commander of the Legion remained secretly loyal to the Crown and to Corbrey's surviving heir, Elissa. As the battles raged, our top men infiltrated



the rebels command structure and at a key time, beheaded the rebels force.

Elissa survived, and was crowned Queen. As thanks for our support and help, the Gryphon Legion was disbanded and reincorporated as the Order of the Gryphon: a specialist force, loyal only to the Crown, and tasked to defend the Crown's interests against all threats to the realm.



The Oath of Loyalty is what sets us apart from the other forces active in Corvantin. It encapsulates the honour we gain from serving the Crown, and the obligations we hold to His Majesty. It is what allows us to be trusted with state secrets, to take a heavy hand with His Majesties enemies, and to know that we are righteous. It is, in essence, what defines us.

“I swear this Oath upon my soul and my blood, my name and my honour: I will work for the Crown, for the betterment of the Crown. I will maintain peace and order by any means necessary. I will defend these lands against all threats, to my last breath. I will defend my Oathsworn brother, regardless of disagreements, and know that they will defend me. We are the Hand of the King, the blade in the shadows, the shield in the line. Til death release me, my honour forsake me, or my liege free me: I do so swear.”

Breaking this Oath is the worst crime a member of the Order can do – to become Forsworn is to forsake all honour, to betray everything the Order stands for. The harshest penalties are reserved for those who break their Oath, ranging from expulsion from the Order through to death, depending on the severity of their trespass.

It is important to note the caveat afforded by “I will defend my Oathsworn brother, regardless of

disagreements, and know that they will defend me”. The Gods know we’re a disparate group, from innumerable backgrounds and stations, and we cannot all be expected to get along like best friends. However, regardless of dislike and vitriol, you do not harm your brothers and sisters, nor do you – by inaction – allow harm to come to them. Think of the Order as a family – you don’t need to like the other members, but you will stand by them against outside threats.

By the same token, heed must be paid to “my Liege free me”. This caveat allows old members of the Order to be released from service once they are too old or wounded to continue as a member of the Order; likewise, a member may choose to retire early so as to enjoy their life. There is no dishonour in asking to be released if the desire behind it is pure.

However, there is another side to this caveat. If a member is consistently stupid, foolish, reckless or acts against the Order and their brethren, they may well be released from service. This is different to being Forsworn, as to become Forsworn implies a deliberate



Like all major armed forces, there are ranks within the Order, and a chain of command. Unlike some forces, rank within the Order is granted by service to the Crown, successful completion of missions, and acts of exceptional bravery. However, rank within the Order is a double-edged sword: while there is the assumption that those below you in the chain of command must obey you, you must still treat them with respect. Unreasonable behaviour, acts of feckless stupidity and abuse of position can and will result in sanctions. This can range from corporal punishment to demotion to, in extremis, dismissal from the Order and prosecution as a Forsworn.

When a member first joins the Order of the Gryphon, they are known as *Oathsworn Initiates*. This is a provisional rank, and does not convey the full protections and support afforded to full members of the Order. This rank is maintained until they have successfully completed their first mission for the Order and proven their worth in battle.

Once their valour has been proved, they become a full-fledged member of the Order, and hold the rank of *Oathsworn Brother* (or *Sister*). The majority of members maintain this rank throughout their careers in the Order, being content to work for the good of the realm without worrying about the burdens of command.

When a member has successfully completed a number of missions, and have proven themselves worthy of promotion, they may advance in rank to *Oathsworn Veteran*. At this level, the member is a survivor of a number of missions, and has proven themselves capable and competent at their role. It is expected that a Veteran will look out for newer members – especially Initiates – and guide them into the Order.

At any given point in time, there ranges from five to ten *Oathsworn Sergeants*. These are the most experienced members and have usually seen a great deal of service – both for the Order and potentially in their lives outside. It is no easy task to become a Sergeant, and the role carries with it a great deal of prestige and influence within the Order and with those the Order deals with. As an Oathsworn Sergeant, it is expected that they take command of any given mission. They are responsible for the success of the mission, and training newer members into working together and best using their skills in synergy. They are also expected to maintain discipline and deal with minor infractions and offences.

Directly above the Sergeants, and acting as the main link between the Crown, employers and other agencies are the three *Oathsworn Captains*. The three Captains hold positions of pretty-much absolute power within the Order, answering only to the Commander and the King. They adjudicate on disputes and offences, take the oaths of new members, and help arrange and organise missions.



They can be counted on to be fair and just, for a corrupt Captain does not hold his position for long.

The *Quartermaster* of the Order holds a similar rank and authority as that of the three Captains. Normally, the Quartermaster would also travel with the Order when large-scale mobilisations happen, but that is not presently the case. The current incumbent, one Corlan Phaestus, is a Dwarf of extremely long service and regard. However, his frequent exposure to The Shifting over the decades has twisted his form sufficient that he can no longer walk, consigning him to his forge. That said, the same energies which have broken his form have given him a mastery over steel few have seen before, and consequently he is very settled in the role. Corlan Phaestus personally smiths every single piece of metal arms and armour used by Order members, hence his (some may say) over-protective nature over his equipment. He has also forged the Gryphon's Talons – the master-crafted blades carried by each Captain and the Commander.

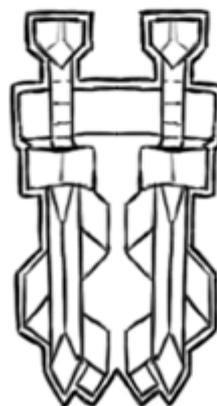
The highest rank in the Order is that of Oathsworn Commander. Currently held by Lord Jerish Govannon, the Oathsworn Commander answers only to the Crown and has overall control over the Order, the missions we undertake, and those who join. The Oathsworn Commander's lot is not an easy one, and he seldom is seen by the main body of the Order, preferring to delegate responsibilities to his Captains while he maintains the links with the nobility.



INITIO



GERMANUS



EVOCATUS



While members of the Order are still subject to the laws of whichever land they may be in, and obviously subject to the over-riding Royal Dictates, they do have a lot more latitude in their actions than, say, a freeman or serf. If attacked, a member may kill in self-defence without fear of prosecution. They may use their best judgement to fulfil missions, and are trusted to do what is both right and necessary.

That is not to say, of course, that members may slay, steal and pillage with impunity. Order members are expected to follow the laws as best they can, and will still be held accountable for any crimes and misdemeanours they commit. However, if they can justify their actions suitably, they will have much greater protection from repercussions.

Another benefit which should be borne in mind is this – Shifted members of the Order are subject to the same protections and human members, regardless of Dominion. While in Scarrow, for example, Shifted are generally enslaved or conscripted. However, Oathsworn Shifted are subject to a higher authority than the Jarl, and should be treated no different from Humans. That is not to say they will not face prejudice, discrimination and hatred, but they will be safe from branding and enslavement at least.

This is a fraught time for the Kingdom, and I think this is aptly represented by the influx of new members and new heroes to face the dangers and protect the land. If you are ready to serve, I hope that this document has proved a sufficient source to give you a grounding in the Order – all else can only come from joining and serving.

In honour and faith,

Oathsworn Sergeant,

Bevan Callisto.